

ANNAPOLIS, MD – Congressman Steny H. Hoyer (D-MD) today visited the Harbour School in Annapolis to learn about the facility's programs and discuss some of the challenges facing special needs education.

Harbour is one of the few regional schools that has a comprehensive program to provide direct educational services to children with autism.

"The Harbour School is helping students with learning and other disabilities reach the height of their potential," Hoyer said. "While showing sensitivity to each child's social well-being, Harbour staff finds the strengths within each child and helps them build upon those strengths."

"We were delighted to welcome the Congressman to the Harbour School," remarked Dr. Linda Jacobs, Executive Director and Founder. "His visit demonstrates that the continuum of educational placement options must include specialized schools for students with diverse learning needs."

Jacob Lowenthal, a 14 year-old student at Harbour, was one of 3 students to meet with Hoyer for about an hour today. Like many of his fellow students, Lowenthal is challenged with autism. Following the visit he noted, "I agreed with a lot of Congressman Hoyer's views about appropriate schools for kids who need them."

Lowenthal's mother, Liz, who was also at the meeting, said "Congressman Hoyer is a great advocate for children with different learning needs."

Hoyer, the lead House sponsor of the fifteen year old Americans with Disabilities Act, has been a career advocate for improving and expanding educational opportunities, including special needs education.

He is a cosponsor of the Combating Autism Act of 2005, which expands scientific research into autism, as well as educational and outreach activities surrounding it. Hoyer is also a strong supporter of the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development's upcoming "National Children's Study," which will be the nation's largest and most ambitious long-term evaluation of children's health. "It is critical that we understand how environmental, genetic, and other factors affect children's development – including autism," Hoyer said.

“Children with autism and other challenges can have a bright and prosperous future,” Hoyer added. “It is essential that government at all levels partner with schools like Harbour to provide the opportunities that every American family deserves.”

The Harbour School was founded in 1982 and serves children from throughout Maryland, the District of Columbia, Pennsylvania and Virginia.

###